

6. What has been your experience?—At Wairoa, in the Hawke's Bay District, I have been doing that for the last ten years—that is, draining from the mill back into the swamp through the raupo. I draw the water there from a lake—a lake probably covering about twenty-five acres, which is supplied by water from the swamp. We draw from that lake, and put the water back into the lake again. If we were to deposit the water elsewhere we should soon drain the lake.

7. What condition is the water in?—The water is certainly not of the very best. Being drawn from a swamp and a swampy lake it is not like river-water. We had to convey the water and the stripper-droppings, and so on, for some considerable distance beyond the mill. In the summer-time the stench that used to rise from that heap was pretty solid. But the effect on the fish has been the very opposite to that of which I heard yesterday about their being killed. There are no trout in the lake, but the Maoris go round about the outflow from this flax-mill every evening spearing eels.

8. You were milling some years ago in another part of the country, were you not?—Yes, I was milling on the Manawatu River some seven years ago.

9. Did you adopt any method then for keeping the stuff out of the river?—The by-products of those days were of really no value. The tow we used to burn or dump into the river, and it was easier to dump it into the river because our mill was on the banks of the river. The stripper-droppings were simply carried out into the river with the wash from the stripper. Everything went into the river.

10. What are you doing now: you are not doing that?—No, we are saving the stripper-droppings and the tow. The tow is worth about £11 or £12 a ton, and the stripper-droppings £8 to £9.

11. What method do you adopt for keeping the stuff out of the river?—At one of the mills we have one of those Suttie washing-machines and catcher. Coming from that there is a grating, and there is a man continually at that grating saving these stripper-droppings. That is the only way we have of saving them—trapping them at a grating.

12. Have you ever had any illness?—Not that I am aware of.

13. *Mr. Buick.*] You say that your stripper-droppings are worth from £8 to £9 a ton?—I think the value to-day is about £8 10s. a ton.

14. That is what we call the vegetable-matter, is it not?—We used to let it run out in the heap—short blades of flax.

15. I thought when you said the "droppings" you meant the gum and the vegetable matter?—No; we have not got to the stage of saving that.

16. *The Chairman.*] What distance is your mill from this lake?—About 4 or 5 chains.

17. What do you say is offensive?—The smell in the summer-time from where this is deposited out in the raupo.

18. The smell from the pulp?—Yes.

19. But you have never had any disease from it?—No.

20. Do you think it is at all liable to harbour germs or disease?—I do not think so, because the heap has been there for the last ten years and we have had no sickness.

21. Have you ever heard of the flax-milling industry as an industry being in any way inimical to health?—No, I have not. I think it is just the reverse. When I go to the flax-mill I always get a keen appetite.

22. Do you think the smell is injurious at all?—I should prefer it to the smell around a fellmongery.

23. Supposing you had mills alongside of a stream that was largely used by the settlers down below you, would you feel justified in discharging the pulp—the matter that you put into the lake—into the stream to float away down in the water which your neighbours below you would have to use?—At some of the mills I have been at I do not see that I could help it. For instance, at Waikaka, where I am milling, we are drawing the water from a creek and running it out on to the Government land there. That water is filtering out and finding its way in a zigzag down into the Piako River. I dare say that if I were to go and turn that land up for agricultural purposes there might be a stench for the first year. But if I were to divert that water into the small creek, I should probably be spoiling the creek for anybody who might want to use it. Seeing that I had the facilities for sending the water on to the land and into the Piako River I thought it well to do so; but if that creek were a good big stream I should not hesitate a moment to divert the water into the stream.

24. I referred in my question to an ordinary little stream, of no great volume, that would go down to a low level in the summer-time. Perhaps you have had no experience of them?—No. If I have had a good stream I have put the stuff into the stream. For instance, at Martinborough I put it into the Ruamahanga.

25. Where were you milling at Martinborough?—Next to Martin's, at Otoria, on an Education piece of property on the other side of the river.

26. *Mr. Buick.*] Would your experience warrant you in saying that flax-refuse would kill vegetable matter, such as water-cress?—No, it is more of a fertilizer, I think. We grow very big pumpkins on a vegetation heap at Wairoa.

27. *Mr. Sykes.*] Take the effluent flowing into a drain, we will say?—It will kill if you leave it there long enough. I have seen manuka killed by water lying on it—swamp-water that could not get away.

28. *The Chairman.*] Can you give the Committee any information as to flax-water for stock?—I have not seen them at the water, but I have seen them eating away at the vegetation heap.

29. I mean, drinking this water?—I can only cite my case at Wairoa, where I have had to put this water back into the lake; and the cattle drink that water. That water has been going into the lake for the last ten years, and the only filtration is a bit through the beach.